

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 418

By Finney L

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Patrick Willis of Bruceton, 2007 NFL Draft First Round Selection of the San Francisco 49ers.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those extraordinary athletes who, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, Patrick Willis of Bruceton, Tennessee is one such athlete; this young man's dedication to and ability in the sport of football are surpassed by few and have led him to the greatest heights of success on the gridiron; and

WHEREAS, a phenomenal football star at Hollow Rock-Bruceton Central High School, Patrick Willis was a two-time All-State selection, Regional Most Valuable Player, West Tennessee Player of the Year, and Mr. Central High School; and

WHEREAS, an all-around athlete who won 4 letters in football and basketball in addition to 3 letters in baseball, Mr. Willis became the first football player in Tennessee history to be nominated for both the Mr. Football Award for a Lineman (as a linebacker) and the Mr. Football Award for a Back (as a tailback) in the same season; and

WHEREAS, after accepting a football scholarship to play at the University of Mississippi Patrick Willis played in all 13 games for Ole Miss during his freshman year, making 20 tackles, and received the Scholar-Athlete Award from the Ole Miss Chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, during his sophomore season at Ole Miss, Mr. Willis recorded 70 tackles with 11 tackles for a loss of yardage, as he appeared in 10 of 11 games and earned honorable mention All-SEC honors from the Associated Press; and

WHEREAS, as a junior in 2005, Patrick Willis was named a First Team All-American by CollegeFootballNews.com and the All-American Football Foundation; he made 128 tackles (90 solo) in the 10 games he started and earned First Team All-SEC accolades from the Associated Press, SEC Coaches, CollegeFootballNews.com and Rivals.com; and

WHEREAS, a leader both on and off the field, Patrick Willis is deeply devoted to his family and dedicated his final season at Ole Miss to the memory of his beloved brother Detris, who suffered an untimely death at the age of 17, while swimming with friends in gravel pits near Bruceton; and

WHEREAS, as a senior at Ole Miss, Patrick Willis was a consensus First Team All-American, winning the Butkus Award and Lambert Trophy as the nation's top linebacker and receiving the Conerly Trophy as Mississippi's best college football player; he posted a career-high 137 tackles (87 solo) with 3 sacks and 11.5 stops behind the line of scrimmage; and

WHEREAS, the pre-season recipient of the Chucky Mullins Courage Award, Mr. Willis was selected to the All-SEC First Team by the Associated Press and the SEC Coaches who both also named him their SEC Defensive Player of the Year; and

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2007, his years of hard work on the practice field and in the weight room, which were instrumental to game-time success, were justly rewarded when he was selected by the San Francisco 49ers of the National Football League as the 11<sup>th</sup> overall pick of the 2007 draft; and

WHEREAS, Patrick will join a select number of college football stars who are able to ascend to the ultimate level of competition and continue playing the game they love; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Willis's talent and accomplishments bode well for his success in professional football and in life; and

WHEREAS, inspiring testimony to the benefits of determination, practice, and hard work, Patrick Willis's accomplishments are indicative of the spirit of the outstanding young men of this State and, as such, are worthy of the praise of this body; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join with the family, friends, and fans of Patrick Willis in congratulating

him on being selected in the first round of the 2007 NFL Draft and offer our sincerest wishes for his every continued success both on and off the gridiron.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.